

New unions approved

Union split into two groups: one for managers and one for staff

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Two new unions, including one for town department supervisors, have become official, Town Manager Richard MacDonald announced Monday.

The Massachusetts Division of Labor Relations certified the creation of two collective bargaining units: One includes managerial positions such as the internal department heads at the library, the other includes clerical staff such as the DPW office manager and a police department assistant.

The positions covered by the new unions are the jobs that are part of the Duxbury personnel plan with some major exceptions. According to MacDonald, the following positions are not part of the managers' group: the police chief, fire chief, Council on Aging director, Department of Public Works director, finance director, library director, town accountant and treasurer collector. The union is officially called the professional and supervisory union.

The other union, called the professional support union, will exclude the following positions: the executive assistant to the town manager, the secretary for the town manager and selectmen, all Council on Aging employees and the personnel administrator.

The reasons these specific positions are excluded are because of either confidentiality issues or participation in labor negotiations, said MacDonald.

The process that eventually led to the formation of the new unions began over eighteen months ago, said MacDonald.

In May, the Clipper learned that managers and town department heads were seeking to have the town address employees' long-standing issues with the personnel plan. That initial effort resulted in the Duxbury Professional Employees Association. The personnel bylaw covers about 50 employees whose salaries and benefits are not negotiated through collective bargaining.

In November, organizers said their main motivation was to have the town agree to third-party arbitration, in which employees with an issue could take their grievances to an outside party rather than to their own supervisor, the town manager or the personnel board. Members believed their fellow employees who belong to unions had more options and they wanted the personnel plan to offer them third-party arbitration.

Nancy Denman, head of children's services at the Duxbury Free Library, served as the spokesperson for the Duxbury Professional Employees Association. She said the purpose of her group was never to form a union but that "the goal in the beginning was to have open communication with the town about inadequacies in the personnel plan."

According to a letter from the Duxbury Professional Employees Association published in the Clipper in November, employees had been waiting for some action on the personnel plan since August 2006 when MacDonald solicited their input on the plan and for-

Two new town unions formed

WHO'S IN, WHO'S OUT

Town Manager Richard MacDonald announced the creation of two new unions on Monday. The crux of the negotiations was always over who would or wouldn't be able to join the associations. Here's the breakdown:

Who's in: Director of inspections, deputy assessor, deputy fire chief, DPW operations manager, manager of buildings and grounds, water and sewer superintendent, harbor master, planning director, all library division heads, cemetery and crematory superintendent, conservation administrator, health agent, information systems administrator, recreation director, assistant recreation director, animal control officer and the water/sewer office manager. Most part time employees are not unionized, with the exception of the veterans' agent and administrative assistants at the harbor master's and police department.

Who's out: Police chief, fire chief, Council on Aging director, Department of Public Works director, finance director, library director, town accountant, treasurer/collector, executive assistant to the town manager and selectmen, all Council on Aging employees and the personnel administrator.

warded them to the Personnel Board for review.

"This (the union) was our last alternative," said Denman. "We did not start with this in mind at all."

However, town officials disputed this and said they were prevented from sitting down at the negotiation table by the formal process at the state level.

The new union will "force communication" between the town and its employees, said Denman.

"It forces the town to sit down with the union's bargaining unit," said Denman.

MacDonald said he is

working to review the positions that are now part of the new unions and their associated compensation. He said that the changes to the personnel plan to reflect the addition of the new unions will not be ready for the annual Town Meeting in March, but must wait until next year.

As far as changes in pay and benefits for the newest union jobs, MacDonald said there would be no adjustments until contracts had been negotiated and there is money to fund them. He is currently negotiating contracts with seven separate unions.

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